

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 772. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. FENDER-CUDLIP).

### CHAPTER XVII. A FIRST LESSON.

"Now for Madame Voglio!"

Jenifer said this in quite a hopeful, exultant tone the next morning after breakfast — after a breakfast at which her mother had declared the eggs to be fresher, the loaf lighter, and the butter and milk sweeter than she could ever have supposed would have been procurable in the London market.

"Now for Madame Voglio!"

She said the words quite encouragingly to herself, and then all in a moment she felt dispirited.

"Mother, if she tells me I howl like a cat, and shall never be able to sing properly, what will you say when I come home to you?"

"Ah, Jenny dear, she'll never tell you that! you with that willow-wand figure of yours, and that face——"

"Mother, mother dearest, my figure and face have nothing to do with my voice, and perhaps my voice will have little to do with my singing," Jenifer said dolefully.

"Now, Jenny, that's ungrateful! Your poor dear father always said that you reminded him of Louisa Pyne, or Louisa Vining—or was it Madame Dolby?—more than anyone he ever heard."

Jenifer laughed and posed before the looking-glass for a moment, adjusting tulle about her throat, and trying to appear absorbed in the success of her own appearance. But, in reality, she was asking herself whether she had not, in very truth, been influenced in the decision she had come to about making singing her profession by unwise exaggerated amateurish

expressions of applause and criticism, such as those to which her mother had referred.

"At any rate I shall soon know the truth from Madame Voglio," she told herself, drawing a long breath, which was not one of relief.

As she went out alone in London for the first time, as she took the first steps forward on that bread-winning path which she had resolved to pursue, the country-bred girl felt very desolate. There had never been anything approaching to solitude for her for many miles round about Moor Royal. Every turn in every road, every hedge, and tree, and gate-post, every primrose bank and ferny hollow, had been familiar to her; and, with or without human companionship, in those well-known haunts she had never felt alone. But here, surrounded by houses on every side, stretching away into apparently interminable vistas of streets, knowing that each house contained her fellow-creatures, none of whom she knew, none of whom knew her, that deadly feeling of loneliness in a crowd, which hurts one into a full sense of one's own insignificance, fell upon her and nearly crushed out hope.

She had not gone out alone without suffering a little opposition from her mother. Refreshed by the blameless breakfast, and by the undeniably superior air of the lodgings and furniture, Mrs. Ray had proposed herself as Jenifer's companion in her first visit to the formidable singing-mistress. But Jenifer had sagaciously tempered her mother's valour with her own discretion. If a deadly disappointing blow were to be dealt to her, she would prefer receiving it unwitnessed by any other than the one who dealt it. But she would not give this, her real reason, to Mrs. Ray for fear of dispiriting her.

"I would rather go alone to Madame

Voglio, and get you to go into Kensington Gardens with me by-and-by, mother; it's genuine business that takes me out this morning, and a lady can go anywhere alone when the object is 'business.'"

"I don't think your dear father would have liked it," Mrs. Ray said reflectively. "When we used to come to London for a change, he never let me walk a yard in the streets by myself. He always said it didn't look well."

"No one will look at me," Jenifer said; and then veracity prompted her to add: "And if anyone does I needn't be ashamed to be looked at."

"You're too pretty for it—much, much too pretty," Mrs. Ray thought, and the thought shone in her eyes. Still, she let the prospect of Kensington Gardens in the afternoon weigh against her traditional sense of what was right, and so it came to pass that Jenifer carried her point, and got off alone.

The girl was quite unconscious of being watched by a pair of anxious eyes, as she went down the steps and turned down the road in the direction which would lead her to Madame Voglio's. These eyes took in every detail of Jenifer's face, figure, and dress, as the girl stepped out freely with her head held high, and no sign of doubtfulness about her, and the owner of the eyes felt a pang.

"If he had hinted to me what she was like, I'd have seen my home broken up—I'd have starved, rather than I'd have had them here to see it grow under my eyes."

Mrs. Hatton uttered these words aloud, and stamped her foot and clenched her hands as she spoke. The stamping and clenching were not uncontrollable actions by any means, but this lady loved a little bit of acting even to herself. On this occasion though, her audience was larger than she knew of, for, her back being towards the door, Ann had entered unperceived.

"What are you conjuring up now, ma'am?" the woman asked reproachfully but very gently, almost as one might speak to a wilful child who was doing something detrimental to itself.

"Oh," Mrs. Hatton answered, laughing a light, sustained, untrue laugh, "I was only conjuring, as you call it, up a vision of the love-making that will go on here, and the marriage that will take place from here by-and-by."

"And why not, ma'am? You've had

enough of love-making, I should think," Ann replied, still in that tone of forbearing gentle reproach.

"And enough of marriage too, you might add, Ann," Mrs. Hatton answered, sighing with a mournfulness that would have been profoundly touching, if there had not been about it just the same faint suggestion of its being a bit of stage business, like the stamping and clenching.

"And of marriage too, poor dear," Ann replied tenderly and respectfully. There was no doubt as to the sigh she heaved, that was genuine enough, and it had the effect of making her mistress natural for a few moments.

"Poor good old Ann!" she said warmly, "I often think you're more really and truly sorry for me than I am for myself."

"I've grieved enough for the past, ma'am; it's no use either for you to bitter yourself, or for me to try and bitter you any more about that; but you might be happy enough, and at peace now, if you'd only let yourself be—if you wasn't so restless, so craving always for something you haven't got."

"My good Ann, I believe you think that if people have enough to eat and drink, and good clothes to wear, and a good house to cover them, they are possessed of all the materials for happiness."

"I should say so, ma'am, specially of one who's been so near to losing all these good things you talk of as you've been."

"Through the wickedness of others," Mrs. Hatton said quickly.

"Through the wickedness of others; but if some have been very bad to you, ma'am, there's others that have been very good."

"You mean Mr. Boldero? Yes, he has been good, he always will be good to me, and I venerate, and esteem, and love him for it."

"Do all that as much as you like, but don't go conjuring up things," Ann said stoutly. Then she went about her work, and Mrs. Hatton changed her pretty, brightly-embroidered dressing-gown for something more sombre in which to visit her new lodger, Mrs. Ray.

She spent an hour so profitably with Mrs. Ray, that at the expiration of it that lady was quite ready to take the interesting mistress of the house at her own valuation. Yet this end had been attained without Mrs. Hatton having committed herself to the making of any one distinct or clearly defined statement about herself.

Nevertheless, she had contrived to imbue Mrs. Ray with a deep sense of compassion for the many undeserved sufferings and reverses which she had experienced, and with a warm feeling of admiration for the gallant, long-suffering, womanly heroism with which she had endured them. And in return Mrs. Ray had told every fact concerning herself and her family—the Moor Royal property, the way her sons had married, and Mr. Boldero's extraordinarily vacillating conduct about Jenifer—which she could call to mind.

Mrs. Hatton made no comment on this last subject; she only said:

"Mr. Boldero is one of the best, perhaps the best and noblest character I've ever met with."

"My poor dear husband, who had great insight into character, always said the same," Mrs. Ray responded warmly.

"Perhaps without presumption I may say that I know him better, more thoroughly, than any other human being," Mrs. Hatton said with that audacious meekness which disarms suspicion or resentment.

"Indeed!" Mrs. Ray exclaimed with warm, kindly interest.

"Yes, indeed," Mrs. Hatton went on with pious fervour, and such a glow of generous truthfulness about her, that clearer eyes than Mrs. Ray's might have failed to discern either the art or the nature of the woman; "yes, indeed. We were old neighbours when I was a child, and the first act of his that I heard of impressed my childish mind with a deep sense of his superiority to other men. I was a curious little child, singularly shy and reticent, but full of enthusiasm and deep feeling."

Mrs. Hatton paused for a moment to mark the effect of this word-portrait of herself on her hearer. Observing that Mrs. Ray was listening with amazed delight, the little lady proceeded to make further efforts at being graphic and pictorial.

"Perhaps, seeing me now, you will hardly believe that I was one of those lovely children who are sure to command attention wherever they may be. I lived in an atmosphere of admiration, and quite revelled in it. Mr. Boldero was, I think, the only person who never told me in words how bewitching and beautiful I was."

"But I'm sure he expressed it in look and manner?" Mrs. Ray questioned

eagerly, for she began to feel jealous on her daughter's account.

"Oh, I don't say that. Mind, I don't say that for a moment," Mrs. Hatton cried with a little deprecating wave of her head and hands. "I am a very humble-minded, retiring little woman, and I never look for attention, or take any amount of expressed admiration or regard for granted. I am too proud; I have too much self-respect, humble-minded as I am, to do that; but still, from all I have told you, you can understand what a deep claim Mr. Boldero has on my regard. I feel that I can quite rely on your sympathy and—and delicacy of feeling."

Mrs. Ray, thus appealed to, gave ardent assurance of her understanding of and perfect sympathy with all the circumstances of Mrs. Hatton's deeply-interesting case; and as soon as she had done so, Mrs. Ray reflected that she knew nothing whatever of it. Still, this reflection in no wise shook her simple faith in the intrinsic worth, undeserved suffering, and generally much-to-be-applauded character and conduct of her new acquaintance.

Meanwhile, as Mrs. Hatton was improving the shining hour with the mother, the daughter was having a "first lesson."

Madame Voglio treated her professional pupils to more of the undress and easy side of her household modes than she was wont to display towards those who were, like Mrs. Jervoise, at the same time pupils and possible patronesses. Accordingly, this morning, when she heard that the girl from the country, who wanted to make her wood-notes wild heard on the London concert-boards, had come by appointment, the great singer graciously ordered the aspirant up at once, without regard to the circumstance of being in the midst of an oleaginous breakfast in a corresponding dressing-gown.

Jenifer's first sensations were of nausea and repulsion. She had been walking briskly through the fresh, sweet air for the last half-hour; she had been accustomed all her life to seeing women as fastidiously arranged in the early morning as at any other hour of the day; and now, at mid-day, this woman, who was notorious for wearing hundreds of pounds' worth of lace on her dresses every time she sang in public, and whose jewels had most of them a history, was lolling, with unkempt hair, in a palpably unbatched condition, in a smart, soiled dressing-gown, with loosely stockinged and slippared feet stuck out

before her, by the side of a demoralised breakfast-table.

Before Jenifer had time to condemn her, and turn to flee, Madame Voglio had risen, and with a grace that was due as much to good-heartedness as to training, had welcomed her new pupil, and swept away the first evil impression.

"I sang myself into littlepieces yesterday, and I am not joined together again yet," she explained; "my work tears me to tatters—ah yes, as yours will soon; but you are young and so beautiful, the tatters will be pretty to look at. Now come, have a cutlet and a cup of my coffee? No? Ah, you don't know what you are refusing. My cutlets and my coffee are not to be lightly refused. You breakfasted hours ago, you say? ah, so did I; but that was yesterday. And to-day demands its breakfast; and see how I meet its demand. I supply myself with a cutlet that has formed a little friendship with a tomato, and has just bowed to a little chervil and a chive. Now, tell me, what have you learnt, and what have you come to me to unlearn?"

This last sentence was fired into Jenifer so abruptly and unexpectedly, that it startled her into boldness.

"When I have learnt something from you, I may be able to tell you what I have to unlearn."

Madame gave way to the indulgence of a hearty unrestrained laugh.

"Well said," she cried approvingly; "if your voice is as strong, and your ear as true, and your style as individual as your speech, you will do what you intend to do—you will succeed!"

Jenifer despised herself for it, but she could not help a smirk of self-gratulation passing over her face.

Madame Voglio saw the smirk and fathomed the cause of it in an instant, without at the same time perceiving the young woman's contempt for herself, or rather for her own momentary elation.

"Ah," madame cried, shaking a fat, white, well-shapen finger at her pupil, "do not think of success, do not even dream of it; keep it always before you that the 'best' have failed, and tell yourself that you are not one of them; put all your failures away behind you patiently, but don't think that you're nearer success for doing it. Why, even I," and she flung her arms wide-open, and then thumped her hands back vehemently on her breast, "even I have not always had success! Think of that, and prepare yourself."

## STEELE'S WASTE-PAPER BASKET.

MOST editors, we imagine, find it easier work to fill their waste-paper baskets, than to fill their columns. It may not have been exactly so with the editor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, still numbers of letters were delivered at Mr. Lillie's shop in Beaufort Buildings in the Strand, designed "in imitation of the great authors they were addressed to," to explode and correct sundry vices, follies, fashions, indecorums, and irregularities then reigning, which found their way to that bourne from which such things seldom return.

Having a shrewd eye to business, instead of destroying the contents of Steele's waste-paper basket, the perfumer carefully preserved them until both the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had run their course. Then he asked Sir Richard's permission to print the communications he had thrown aside as worthless; a permission readily accorded, on condition that he took care that no persons or family were offended, and that he published nothing contrary to religion or good manners. With that proviso, Lillie was welcome to do as he listed with the papers in his hands, and had their original proprietor's good wishes for the success of his venture.

Thus encouraged Lillie set to work arranging his spoil, and, in 1725, gave the reading public the result in a book entitled *Original and General Letters sent to the Tatler and Spectator, providing "religion and morality for the upright and just, manners for the rude, a whip for the incorrigible, sobriety for the drunkard, temperance for the epicure, mirth for the laughers, dress and fashion for the gay, and just satire for the insipid and pretenders;"* and, judging by the subscription-list, the enterprising perfumer had no reason to repent his intrusion into the field of literature.

In his prefatory remarks Lillie somewhat sorrowfully states that while but three or four of the three hundred epistles in his possession emanated from victims of the wiles of womankind, much too large a proportion of them came from innocent women who had suffered from the falsity of men. We would not impugn his arithmetic, but it must be remembered that he was dealing with only the residuum of Steele's correspondence; and possibly the majority of the complaining damsels had really no more personal experience of man's perfidy, than the insignificant creature who never



dressed, took snuff, or did anything that was fashionable, and averred she dared not marry the man of her heart for fear of thereby losing his love; the great neglect and coldness men displayed to their wives being so notorious, that if a man could but prevail upon himself to treat his wife with a little good manners after a month or two of wedlock, he was accounted a wonderful good husband, and she out of her wits who expected more. All young women, however, were not of this fearsome mind, for we find one waxing angry with wearers of Her Majesty's uniform for taking a lady's no for no, asserting

The lady showing but a modest scorn,  
Their courtship's over, and their love is gone;

forgetting

A lady's gained not with that ease,  
As they storm towns, and take them when they please.

Men of war who went a wooing might well look for an easy conquest if the girls of the period worshipped valour as ardently as the maiden who, recounting her experience in valentine-drawing, wrote: "I myself, at first putting my fingers into the hat, began to feel half-transported on a sudden, as if I had really felt fortune leading my hand where my heart wished it. As soon as I had pitched upon my lot, I unrolled it by degrees, and examined it by inches. Whilst I was thus feasting my eyes on my fortune, in comes an old uncle of mine, who, seeing me so delighted with a bit of paper, concluded it must be a bank-note, and could not possibly be persuaded that Prince Eugene, being drawn a valentine, would afford one so much joy and satisfaction."

According to Miss Isabella Thoughtful, the prevailing vice of England's Augustan age, was that of detraction. "We hang a thief for stealing a trifle," says she, "but those go unpunished that take from us our reputation, and sometimes our fortunes, for it is often seen that make-bates are the occasion of estates being given away, and so posterity suffers." Somebody else had stepped into the dead man's shoes for which Miss T.'s papa had waited, but we cannot so easily explain Porcia's onslaught on the Christian Hero, who must have been confounded to read: "You often suffer yourself to be imposed on by malicious sly insinuations from the worst of people, whose infamous art it is to sink all that have any advantage in merit to their own level; and you, by lending an easy credit and ready compliance to dispense their

poison, become an accessory to their guilt. If either religion, humanity, or justice have any weight with you, you will be tender for the future how you contribute to blast the reputation of any person."

Very gently is the sex handled in Lillie's book. One gentleman remarks that since the ladies have taken to tea-drinking, they cannot eat beef of a morning; another mildly suggests that to avoid confusion, a country gentlewoman should be called "Mistress;" a city matron, "Madam;" common serving-maids be content to be called plain Jane, Doll, or Sue; and better-born and higher-placed ones should be addressed as Mrs. Prim, Mrs. Patience, and so forth. But only one letter-writer is at all uncomplimentary, and all his complaint is that hoops have reached the red petticoats in the country, so that Kate and Jane are longer in getting over a stile than a fine lady is in getting out of her coach. A lover of animals, it is true, recognises the necessity of rating the ladies for their being as over-fond of lap-dogs, squirrels, and parrots, as the country squire was of the mare for which he put himself and man into mourning; but even he thinks it would be doing better service to call to account those of the rougher sex, who go to the contrary extremes in the treatment of creatures but one remove below them. "I look," he says, "upon hocking of cattle, as in Ireland, and cutting large pieces of flesh from them, and then turning them grazing, as in the Highlands of Scotland, to be arts as much denoting a man as much a tiger or a wolf, as is consistent with his being the external figure of a human creature." Had this Highland custom been generally known in England, Peter Pindar would not have penned the couplet:

Nor have I been where men—what loss, alas!  
Kill half a cow, and turn the rest to grass!

A jest that might have cost the doctor dear, had traveller Bruce been of as bellicose a mind as the "hybernian gentleman" who challenged a correspondent of the Spectator for not including Ireland among lands "blessed with a climate."

Another hater of cruelty inveighs against bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting. He would fain see his countrymen take to worthier sports, and asks: "What think you, gentlemen, of ninepins—the harmless recreation of ninepins, or the noble and healthful game of cricket? In these plays you have as much exercise and diversion as in throwing at cocks; or,

if blood be your business, play at cudgels, and break each other's heads."

Some of Steele's correspondents would have had him play the part of marriage-broker; one sending all the way from York to say that if anyone wanted a tidy lass with more tongue than beauty, he was willing to dispose of his wife for the sum of half-a-crown; while a Mrs. H—t writes: "If you have any friend of ability, I have a young genteel widow, twenty-three years old, and hath one hundred, eighty, seventy, and twenty-five pounds per annum, and two coal mines that at least will bring in two thousand pounds, perhaps four, five, or six thousand pounds per annum, with the assistance of four or five thousand gradually, not all at once. She well-born and educated, without child, brother, and sister." Of these two investments, the bigamous one would probably have proved the best; but neither looks sufficiently tempting to have lured a member of the Mousetrap Club, in Fish Street Hill, into committing matrimony, and so having to pay a round sum of money to his brother members. Such a penalty might not have deterred a gentleman of whom his son says: "He thought matrimony so great a blessing, that he resolved, according to ancient custom, that his son's wedding should be celebrated with many fiddles, much eating, and abundance of mirth; for he hated the modern way of stealing into a church, and sneaking out of it, turning tail at the porch; which he had observed to be the great reason that most men and their wives went different ways all their lives afterward. The clock struck five before we threw the stocking."

A defender of the genuineness of Phalaris's Epistles cries out against the prevalent humour of setting wit and banter—or as the new word has it, bamboozle—in opposition to solid learning, as if the learned world were not as well worth a man's pains as the beau monde of St. James's coffee-houses, or White's Chocolate House. The inhospitable custom of exacting vails impels a sufferer to write: "When you go from a gentleman's house, you are forced to pay a long reckoning without the satisfaction of a bill; every servant puts himself in the rank to receive his due; the guest as it were running the gantlope, and is forced to pay every pretension, which they claim in proportion to the quality of their offices, which if you mistake, perhaps, you meet with an affront. There is no condition of these payments

being gratuitous, but that they give you no receipt for them." This tax must have been especially inconvenient to the "mashers" of the day, who found a feather in the hat, a ribbon on the sword, a well-jointed snuff-box, and an affected judgment in snuff, all that was necessary to recommend them to the acquaintance of the first quality.

These were the "men of muffs, red-heels, and ribbons," who thronged the theatre when Cibber took a benefit, while on Wilks's night the side-boxes were filled with tall, proper fellows, and stalwart officers. Booth was patronised by the bottle-companions, and the men of wit and gaiety; Mills drew together the sober husbands and sermon-hunters; Powell, the rakes and scorners; Bullock, Penkethman, Johnson, Lee, and Norris divided the suffrages of the wags and laughter-loving playgoers; and Pack, most favoured of actors, was sure of securing not only the merry singers and the busy-bodies, but "all the ladies."

That the present race of exponents of the dramatic art are not to be compared to those of the good old days, is past argument; that the stage has sadly degenerated is as established a fact as that Queen Anne is dead; and yet things were not quite perfect at Drury Lane when Her Majesty was alive, or how comes it that we have an indignant playgoer grumbling at the omission of whole scenes of Othello, and at the bedchamber of Desdemona being crowded with beaux in every part? "When the stifling pillow was uplifted and threatened death was in view, not one endeavoured to prevent it; from thence I thought, that since they could be so cruel, they had much better have kept behind the scenes, then nothing could have been expected from them," and those who came to see the play would have been saved the labour of trying to distinguish who were the spectators and performers on the stage. In onerespect, certainly, our forefathers were no better off than ourselves, the opera-houses being wholly in the hands of foreigners, and the house in Drury Lane not being allowed to have any musical entertainment, so that English masters were excluded from all opportunities of proving their ability, and the public were compelled to listen to foreign music or none.

The greatest curiosity in Lillie's compilation, may be credited to Steele's own pen. A dispute arose respecting the meaning of Chaucer's lines:

If my wife were as little as she is good,  
An inch of cloth would make her gown and hood.

The contention ended in a wager, the parties concerned agreeing to accept the Spectator's opinion as decisive, but it was specially desired that the decision should be given privately, not in the columns of that journal. This was the Spectator's judgment: "Upon the first reflection, one is apt to think this sentence is to the disadvantage of the wife, but upon further consideration it is quite otherwise. The humour of it is, that the man in a rallying way commends his wife under the appearance of discommending her. What makes a sort of riddle of it, is that the imagination is apt to carry the word 'little' to her virtue, as well as to her person, but the word refers to the quality of her body, not to the quality of her mind; so that if she were to be as little as she is good, the better woman she is, the less woman she would be. The meaning is, not that if her bulk and virtue were equal, a little would clothe her, but if she were in proportion as remarkably little as she is eminently good, she would be so little, that an inch of cloth would make her a gown and hood. Thus it appears to me, her increase of virtue would diminish her size, and the diminution of her virtue enlarge her size; and the words are a commendation.—(Signed) The Spectator."

## ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

### PART X.

THE something bitter that is said to rise to the surface of the cup of life, even when it seems filled to the brim with enjoyment—this flavour of bitterness was supplied by Hilda's brother. Hilda herself looked forward to meeting him with some dread, for she felt sure that he would bitterly resent the change that had occurred in her prospects. Mr. Chancellor no doubt had sundry good things at his command, which he might have bestowed on Redmond without being the poorer himself. But such was not the case with me, and although Hilda had suggested that we should do something for poor Redmond—it was difficult to see what form that something could assume—my own notion was that sufficient had already been done for him by Hilda, and, indeed, a great deal too much. Not only had Redmond eaten his own cake, but a good portion of his sister's, and still he wanted more.

Already we had received a telegram from Redmond announcing his arrival at Trouville, and that he was stopping at the

Roches Noires, and advised his father and Hilda to join him there.

"Well," said Tom when he heard the news, "I am glad we have come upon these Roches Noires at last, for we have been chasing them all along the coast without coming upon them."

And this indeed had been the case. At all the sea-bathing places we had heard of these terrible Roches Noires as the dread of mariners and regular ship-breaking rocks, but always just out of sight along the coast.

"And is your poor brother living on those dreadful rocks?" cried Mrs. Bacon in full sympathy for the hardship of his lot, imagining that he supported himself on the crabs and periwinkles he found in the crevices.

But her mind was relieved when she found that the Roches Noires was a fashionable hotel, where the only hardship to be feared was in the evil quarter of an hour when the reckoning was settled.

But our next news of Redmond was not nearly so satisfactory. It was in the form of a telegram to say that he had been playing baccarat with the Prince de B—— and the Count de St. Pol the night before, and had lost two thousand francs. Hilda must telegraph the money to him—his honour was involved.

There was nothing for it but to telegraph to Rothschilds' to send the money. But it was evident that Redmond, once loose again upon the world, would prove a fearful sieve, through which a fortune would soon percolate.

"Perhaps he will win next time, poor fellow!" suggested Hilda hopefully.

On the other hand, Redmond might lose a great deal more; and if the Count de St. Pol should thus happen to get him in his power, he might use his power in a very awkward manner. However, we should be all at Trouville on the following day, and we could only trust to the chance that he would not meantime get into any very serious scrape.

If it had not been that overmastering destiny urged us on to Trouville, we should probably have remained where we were, notwithstanding the smells, which, after all, vanished for a time after each flood-tide, to return, perhaps, in the still small hours of the night, when the wind was hushed, while the sea could hardly be heard to murmur in the distance. To us the great charm was in the cool and pleasant-looking haven, with the indications it gives of groves and fields behind, and in the broad

smooth strand that is made up entirely of pounded sea-shells, while myriads of shells more or less in progress towards a pounded state line the margin of the waves.

And our hotel is pleasant and brisk with its shaded terrace overlooking the sea, where we sit after breakfast and smoke and talk to the parrot, and try to gain the attention of the big dog, who is generally too sleepy to notice anybody. He is a democratic dog this, for we have seen him early in the morning dashing about and joyously barking among the fishermen and old women with their baskets. If there is a truck to be wheeled or a load to be carried, Bayard is sure to be in the front, encouraging the honest porters with his most approving accents. But as the day wears on and the breakfast hour of the visitors at the hotel approaches, Bayard assumes an aspect of lazy indifference; stretched at full length under a bench he is proof against blandishments that the strongest men would succumb to; pretty fingers caress him, sweet voices appeal to him in the most endearing accents, but little he reck, if they'll let him sleep on, while cakes do not excite his interest in the least, and he is not to be tempted by the choicest morsel from the breakfast-table.

And then it is pleasant to watch the gradually rising tide of visitors. As the penny trumpet-like squeak from the level-crossing announces the approach of a train, the old lady at the crossing having rolled to the gates, draws herself up in front of them with her flag, as if she in her own person guaranteed alike the safety of the public and the railway service, the train glides quietly by, and speculation is rife as to the number of heads to be observed in the carriage windows. Then the omnibus rumbles down from the station, more luggage than omnibus, the driver clinging to some coign of vantage on the baggage. These are the people for the *Châlet Millefleurs*, with its overhanging gables, its verandahs of pitch-pine, and its rustic porches, and presently the house wakes up from its ten months' sleep, there are gay dresses on the balconies, and children and little dogs scamper about the terrace. The men of the party appear, transformed from smart Parisians to equally smart-looking fishermen, their shrimping nets over their shoulders, eager for the exciting sport of "*la chasse aux écrevisses*." Travelling vans come in loaded with draperies, shoes—everything you want. The place is a kind of summer encampment.

And while the long rows of elaborate and fanciful houses on the sands are filling up with visitors, all the cottages on the roads leading into the country—the pleasant cottages almost hidden in shrubs and creepers—are occupied by colonies of Parisians, who enter into primitive modes of life with great relish. Monsieur draws the water from the well, and madame arranges the table with flowers from the garden. Then there follows a great popping of corks and an odour of ragout and fricandeau, and soon through the open door you may see monsieur taking his café in great content, framed in vine-leaves, and metaphorically crowned with roses.

The evening is charming—the sun going down, round and red, into the sea; an infinite softness about the haven mouth, a white sail stealing gently in. As darkness comes on—the light in darkness of a summer night, the brilliant gleam from the lighthouse of Cape la Hève throws a pencil of lambent light across the placid sea. Havre lies below, invisible except that we fancy we catch a faint glow on the horizon from its gas-lamps and streets of brilliant shops; nearer at hand, glitters over the waters the long sea-front of Trouville, set in diamond sparkles, while its casino, brilliantly illuminated, flashes and gleams an invitation to the carnival. Can we hear the band? No, it is too far off, ten miles or so as the crow flies, and yet there is a feeling of music in the air. Is Redmond, we wonder, sitting in that fairy-like palace, watching with inward fever the turn of a card, with all that he has left of money and reputation hanging upon the result?

We have a little mild gambling going on here, at the *établissement* at Houlgate: whist and *écarté*, at which a few five-franc pieces change hands, and there are inveterate bezique players, who will play on well into the night. But all this in the most respectable way, the chief gainers being the proprietors of the *établissement*, who levy a heavy tax on the cards and other paraphernalia of play. And people go to bed early, being generally rather sleepy from their exploits in shrimping and fishing, and from their open-air life on the sands, and everything is quiet long before midnight. But when all our lights are turned out we can still see Trouville flaring at us over the bay.

To-night as the glare of lights died away the sea took up the illumination, breaking in waves of lambent flame over the sands; and the fisher-boats came home, leaving a



trail of mystic light behind them. All was glamour, nought was truth, for the sky seemed to share in the phosphorescent flare, the stars twinkling doubtfully through thin flakes of luminous clouds. We sat out till late watching the fairy scene, and Hilda and I fell into serious talk about the future.

"I want to go home, Frank," said Hilda; "I want to see the old place while I can still call it home. I want to talk to the old people and tell them all about you, and to say good-bye to the children, who will have to acknowledge another lady of the manor with smiles and greetings. But just to see them all once and say good-bye to the old life—I must go, Frank."

And then it struck me for the first time, forcibly and strongly, how much Hilda resigned when she gave up the Chancellor alliance. What could ever make up to her for the loss of the old home, that was now passing into the hands of strangers? And then it did not seem possible to prevent this loss. It was not likely that Mr. Chancellor would part with his bargain, and give up the Combe Chudleigh property to his successful rival. Human nature could not be expected to remain so entirely free from resentful feelings. But it would be easy enough to fulfil Hilda's present desire.

We could run over to Dartmouth, Hilda and I, and the old squire, while the others amused themselves at Trouville.

"Then we will start to-morrow night," cried Hilda eagerly, "and we shall see the old place by morning light."

And then I had to explain how it was impossible we could sail that next night, as I was pledged to meet the Count de St. Pol, to give him his revenge at whist.

It seemed a trivial thing; but the meeting had been arranged before witnesses with something like solemnity, and if I failed to appear it would be said that I was afraid to meet him.

"And you will not run this little risk for my sake then?" urged Hilda.

To which I replied, with the trite quotation:

"I could not love thee, dear, so well, loved I not honour more."

Hilda suddenly turned pale.

"Frank," she said, laying a hand upon my arm, "do you mean to say that if this Count St. Pol thrusts a quarrel upon you—and I have a presentiment that he will—you will fight him?"

The question was not easy to answer. A few years ago, when I was poor and rather

hopeless, with nothing to make life particularly desirable, I would have gone out and been run through by the count without scruple. But now, with wealth and my heart's desire, and the prospect of a life heightened by a woman's faithful love, the matter assumed a very different aspect. I should gladly have entertained a conscientious scruple against fighting. But then I felt no such scruple. I could certainly plead that in my own country such affairs were condemned by public opinion, and practically obsolete. But being in France, and engaged in altercation with a Frenchman, was I not rather bound by the customs of his country?

Hilda saw by my hesitation that her presentiment was not altogether unreasonable. But she was too staunch to exact any promise from me to decline any challenge.

"Only remember, Frank," she said, "if anything happens to you I shall die of grief and remorse. So you will do your best to keep out of danger."

And I promised this readily enough, reminding her, too, how these affairs were generally harmless enough, and rarely resulted in a serious casualty.

"But this is different, Frank," said Hilda mournfully. "I saw his face when you struck him, and he meant what he said—that you should pay for it with your life. And I could not see it all till now."

Altogether it would have been better if Hilda had remained in the dark as to my appointment with the count, for the knowledge made her anxious and restless, although she put a brave face upon the matter, and tried to appear easy and unconcerned. We were to go on to Trouville in the morning, and Hilda and I had determined to walk over to the station at Villers-sur-Mer, while Tom had undertaken to drive Contango, by easy stages, all the way to Trouville, taking Miss Chancellor with him, with Justine as a make-weight on the back-seat. The others were to come on by omnibus with the baggage. Very soon—by next season probably—the coast-line will be finished all along, and people will be able to get to Trouville from any point along the coast without making a long détour. But for the present, there is an awkward little break in the line of communication.

The walk to Villers proved rather hot and tiring, first along the coast, where the cliffs, of no great height, are of a clayey, crumbly nature, and then, as the sun beat down upon us hot and fiery, we took to

the inland road, cooler and more shaded, a dusty, arable country all about us till we descended into the Vale of Villers, well-wooded and luxuriant. Villers itself is of the quaint fantastic order, showing a studied quaintness, a regulated fantasy. Thatched roofs are fashionable, with lilies and flags growing on the ridges, as in some of the old farm-houses. Here are cottages as costly as palaces, and a studied simplicity which is the very refinement of luxury. A place, too, evidently on the rapid increase, where life is more reserved and exclusive than at Trouville, but a gay, pleasant place all the same, and of a cleanliness quite remarkable among French coast-towns. The road from the town to the station is quite charming, with trees, and stream, and gracious curves that raise an expectation of pleasanter scenes round the corner. It is quite a disappointment to come at last upon a commonplace little wooden station; but, however, the works are progressing rapidly, and soon we shall have stations as smart and coquettish as the towns they are to serve.

Indeed, this brightness and coquetry are the main charms of these watering-places. As far as scenery is concerned, the English coast, it must be said, is far superior, but then the life and gaiety of the scene, the absence of noise and vulgarity, of pretence and assumption—these latter attributes, indeed, not altogether absent, but more skilfully veiled—all these things make the sojourn by the sea in France very enjoyable. And then there is the almost certainty of getting something fit to eat wherever you may go, and of not being fleeced beyond reason. The hotel bills no longer, indeed, cause amazement at their smallness, as we read in the volumes of earlier days, but on the other hand, they do not affright by their extravagance.

Trouville is different again. We feel the change in a moment, as we alight in the brisk, noisy station, amid the shouts of the drivers of voitures, the commissionaires of hotels, and a generally excited public. Tom meets us at the station; he was the first to arrive, after all. He reports the Sea Mew as lying in port, and awaiting orders. But as yet he has not been able to hear anything of Redmond. He was not at the Roches Noires, but had been there, and was thought to have gone to the château of his friend, the Prince de B—, some twenty miles away, near Pont l'Évêque. But our brigandish friends with the Pyrenean sheep had arrived. Tom had

met them, but alas! in charge of the police of Trouville, who had condemned their proposed entertainment, as not being sufficiently polite or refined. But the police, embarrassed with the charge of two headstrong sheep, which refused to be driven except by their masters, and not much at that—the police were very much inclined to let them go, on their giving a promise to perform only on the outskirts of the town.

Tom had still more news for us. He had passed on the road a select troupe from the circus at Caen, who were to perform to-night in a temporary erection on the beach, and among the troupe was Zamora, looking very bright and happy, who had been chosen on account of her good looks for some subordinate part in the entertainment. As for the Count de St. Pol, he was thought to have left the town, and had probably forgotten all about his engagement to meet us at whist.

As we leave the station our first impression of Trouville is rather as a bustling little port than a fashionable watering-place. We were not prepared to see so much life and animation apart from the flocks of summer visitors. Behind us is Deauville, with its sea front of monumental houses, heavy and rather desolate-looking; and then there is a vista of a long harbour, crowded with fisher-boats and other small craft, with here and there a foreign steamer, and, conspicuous among them all, our own smart-looking Sea Mew. As we cross the bridge into the town it is dead low water, and a big mud-bank is left exposed in the middle of the stream. And upon this bank are gathered quite a little crowd of people, police, douaniers, and other officials. Another crowd is clustered about the parapets of the quay, and some people who have been fishing from the shore with rod and line, have suspended operations, and are watching the scene with interest. Something is lying stark and stiff in the midst of the people upon the mudbank, and that something is the corpse of a drowned man, whose legs, stiff and sodden, are painfully conspicuous. Only Tom and I have caught sight of this, and we hurry the ladies on to spare them the painful scene. Hilda and the rest have come to the conclusion that they will be more comfortable on board the Sea Mew than in a crowded hotel, and we soon reach the yacht's berth in the outer harbour, and go on board. Tom comes up presently, looking rather anxious. He

has just heard that the body found in the river was that of a young stranger, who was supposed to have committed suicide. "If it should be Redmond," murmured Tom, "who has lost a big pile, and ended the matter thus!"

Hilda's first care when she got on board the Sea Mew was to summon Captain Mac and interrogate him as to his being prepared to cross the Channel. The captain was reluctantly brought to acknowledge that everything was in readiness to sail that night, if necessary. The tide would serve from midnight up to three or four in the morning; the sea was calm outside, with every prospect of fine weather, and, if need were, we could make the Isle of Wight before breakfast, and then run along the coast to Dartmouth in another eight hours or so.

"Then you will get steam up, Captain Mac," cried Hilda joyfully, "and be ready to start at any time after midnight."

"Aye, aye, miss," said the captain, who seemed to recognise her as the ruling spirit.

"And now, Frank," said Hilda, turning to me, "if you must go ashore and play cards to-night, I shall send a boat's crew at midnight to bring you away, whether you will or no." But Hilda confessed that she hoped very much the Count de St. Pol would break his engagement. I also began to think that we should hear no more of the count, when, as I crossed the gangway to go ashore with Tom, I saw, rising head and shoulders over the crowd, the well set up torso of Colonel Peltier. The colonel was delighted to come on board and pay his compliments to the ladies. Hilda, however, did not appear to be very well pleased at his appearance, though she tried her best to be gracious in manner.

"We sail to-night, colonel, and shall be glad to take you across with us."

The colonel would have been delighted, but the exigencies of military duties, and so on—

"Then I shall have to break up your whist-party, I am afraid," said Hilda. "I can't spare my cousin and Mr. Lyme."

The colonel looked grave at this.

"But that would be a little—a little—"

Our colonel cannot find the exact epithet to add to his "little," when I relieve him from his embarrassment by assuring him I shall certainly appear at the trysting-place, which is to be the salon de jeu at the casino. And so he takes his leave very politely.

When the colonel was gone, Hilda's face assumed an expression of despair.

"Frank," she said, "I am sure these people mean to assassinate you—not openly to assassinate you, perhaps, but to draw you into a duel, when the count, who is, they say, a magnificent swordsman, will kill you."

I could only comfort her by saying that I did not intend to be killed quietly, and that if the count insulted me publicly, as might possibly be his intention, I should, as the aggrieved party in the contest, have the choice of weapons, and certainly would not choose swords. But Hilda felt sure there was some trap laid for me which would deprive me even of this advantage. And then the poor girl said she would go with me, and not lose sight of me till she had got me on board again. "They can't fix a quarrel upon you, Frank, if I am there." All the same, I could not take refuge behind a petticoat, and Hilda saw this, and was still in despair.

Meantime, Tom had undertaken the disagreeable duty of going to the Morgue to see if he could recognise the features of the drowned man. He returned very soon, and with a brighter face. He did not think that Redmond was the drowned man, although the features were too much swollen to be easily recognised.

That night we dined at the Roches Noires; the roches themselves, which are only a black-looking cliff, are visible a little farther along the coast, although some will have it that the originals, still more black, are to be found elsewhere. There was rather a brilliant gathering at the table d'hôte, fresh toilettes, and nice-looking women of all nationalities, and among the rest we saw our count and the colonel, looking out for their prey. And then we adjourned to the casino and found the grand salon brilliantly lighted up, and a concert going on. Outside it was pleasant to sit on the terraces, while the music, mellowed by distance, mingled with the splash of waves. In the west showed a bright sunset glow, and against that the dark sails of fishing-boats racing for the harbour. All the beach was lighted up, that grand sweep of sands which makes Trouville unapproachable as a watering-place. Cafés shone out in lines of light, booths, and shops, and places of entertainment, all brilliantly illuminated; while beyond faintly shone the phosphorescent sea, and the pale stars which looked quite dim in contrast with all the brightness close at hand.

Tom, I think, was in a sentimental mood that night. He was walking up and down with Miss Chancellor, talking very earnestly. The girl, perhaps, was a little puritanic. She had probably been reproaching Tom with his gambling proclivities; for she had been told of the contest that was impending.

"I can't sneak out of this," Tom was saying, "but I'll promise you for the future—look here, I never play beyond half-crowns and five shillings on the rub, and laying the long or short odds. Come, you won't mind that, will you?"

"But why should you promise me?" asked Miss Chancellor demurely. "If it's wrong you know you shouldn't do it."

The rest of their conversation was lost, but Tom seemed prouder of being scolded than in an ordinary way he would feel at the most lavish praise. And he had no misgivings that the match we were booked for was anything more than a trial of skill in trumping and finessing.

Between Hilda and me few words were spoken, but our silence was more expressive than words. The touch of danger in the future brought us closer together than any number of fair-weather days could have done. As yet neither the count nor his friend had appeared in the casino, and I had promised Hilda that if they did not show themselves by midnight we would come away. But just as the town-clock struck ten, Hilda shivered as if a chill had come over her, and, looking up, I saw the bullet-head, closely cropped, of Colonel Peltier.

"Oh, mademoiselle, I am looking for you on behalf of your father, who is anxious to leave," cried the colonel, and sure enough just behind him was the old squire, who looked quite brisk and *débonair* in his evening costume. Hilda took leave of me with an expressive pressure of the fingers that sent a responsive thrill through my veins, and then I followed the bullet-headed colonel to the *salon de jeu*, a quiet, solemn apartment where the sun-lights shone upon many bald heads bending over their cards, with a calm silence occasionally broken by a gentle clatter of counters, or the shuffling of a pack of cards.

Up to midnight nothing had occurred to mar the harmony of the evening, but Tom and I had been carrying all before us, and our opponents were perhaps a little nettled. Midnight was striking, and I had promised Hilda that we would leave and go on board at that hour if practicable. A hoarse

whistle sounded from the port. It was a gentle hint, no doubt, from the *Sea Mew*. But Tom and I were winners each of a couple of thousand francs, and we could not possibly give up if our adversaries wanted to go on.

### A PLAIN GIRL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MR. LANGLEY had passed a wearisome night, tossing and moaning in a restless succession of dreams. Towards morning he slept somewhat more heavily, but when the servant came with his hot water he woke with a start, and a bewildered cry:

"Where is she? Is she dead?"

The man, turning away, smiled discreetly, for his master was to be married that morning.

"You have been dreaming, sir," he said, drawing up the blinds and letting in a sudden flood of sunshine. Mr. Langley lay for a minute with half-closed eyes.

"Yes, I've been dreaming," he said, in a tone of relief, slowly coming to a consciousness of familiar surroundings, and of the splendour of the August day.

"Ten o'clock, sir; you have no time to lose," said the man. "And here is a letter."

"Very well. I shall get up almost directly."

He turned his head uneasily on his pillow, weary, yet glad of the warm golden morning, and the end of that long night. Of course he had been dreaming—dreaming of Emma Harrison. But why had he dreamt of that poor little girl in Ireland on the night before his wedding-day? He had never seen her since their parting at Ballyvarry; what had brought her back to his memory? After all, he had treated her no worse than scores of others; if all his past triumphs were to rise from the dead, his room should have been full of reproachful visions. Why did this one poor child haunt him thus, when the rest were forgotten? Yet so it had been. He had thought he was walking with her once more in the rectory garden, transformed in his fancy to a strange and desolate place, with a great grey sky above it, and the dead leaves dropping downward to the leaden earth below. He did not know how long this lasted—some dim immeasurable period, as time is in dreams. He woke, and slept again, and it still continued. There were changes, which were no



changes, for through them all they two were always together in a grey solitude. At last an appalling sense of dread came upon him; she was no longer by his side, but lying white, and silent, and asleep, and he could not leave her, could never escape from the horror of that stillness unless she would open her eyes once more, and speak a word to set him free. He stooped to kiss her, saying to himself in his dream, "She is asleep—she is not dead—I know she is not dead; because if she were dead, her lips would be cold." And then with a shudder he felt that the mouth which he touched with his was colder than a stone, and he pressed his chilled lips hopelessly upon it, and found no answering breath, no quivering stir of life and love. It was not wonderful that Mr. Langley, though he might be bewildered for a moment, was glad to have a flood of daylight poured on such a dream as that.

Something, however, of its sadness still lingered with him, or he should have wakened with a lighter heart on the morning which marked the crowning point of his success. The plan he had traced for himself in the autumn had been exactly carried out, except that for the unknown heiress had been substituted Rose Willing. The uncle had died just before Christmas, bequeathing to Rose an even larger inheritance than had been anticipated. Mr. Langley, when he left Ireland early in March, found Mrs. and Miss Willing already established in London.

In his desperate necessity he resolved to play a daring game, and win the girl whom he had won and cast aside twelve months earlier. It was annoying to remember that he had drawn back then, when success was absolutely certain, but he was not a man to waste time in useless regrets, and the very difficulty of the enterprise, under these new conditions, attracted him. It required no little skill and boldness to secure Rose and her money. That one unlucky evening had made Mrs. Willing his enemy; as for Rose, she had believed in him and adored him once, but no one was better aware than Mr. Langley that the rancour of a small-minded woman, who feels that she has been slighted, is more permanent than a good many sweeter sentiments. He set himself therefore to prove to Rose that it was he who had been slighted, and not she, and that any apparent discourtesy on his part was solely due to resentment and wounded feeling. Miss Willing found this

view of the matter very soothing, but while partially accepting it, she eyed her returned suitor distrustfully. She had already begun to suspect designs on her fortune, and found something equivocal in this tardy explanation. Mr. Langley, who was determined to maintain an attitude of superiority, had no easy part to play. He threw himself into it, however, with all his energies; he neglected nothing, he missed no opportunity, he pressed every advantage to the utmost. His courtship had a charm of genuine earnestness, for well as he knew Rose, he was really fascinated by his pursuit of her, and ardent until she yielded. She did yield at last, for with all her watchfulness and her small suspicions, she was no match for Philip Langley when his mind was made up. Thus he had his way, and the prosperous days had glided by till he reached his wedding morning.

While he dressed with elaborate care, the remembrance of the night, and its melancholy oppression, passed imperceptibly away. He pleased himself by recalling the turns and chances of the game which he had brought to so triumphant a close. A little smile, complacent and contemptuous, hovered about his lips, as he thought how well he knew his Rose, and how little she knew him; and he reviewed his tactics with an easy sense of mastery, assuring himself that he had made no mistake from beginning to end. He had almost finished dressing before he noticed the letter lying on his table. Then he happened to catch sight of it, and perceived, with a little shock of surprise, that it was from Emma Harrison. "Curious that she should write to me to-day," he said to himself, "and I was dreaming of her all last night!" For the moment his hands were occupied, and he only glanced sideways at the envelope where it lay, while he retraced the already faded vision. "Well, there was nothing in it, anyhow," he summed up with a half sigh of relief, "or she wouldn't be writing letters."

Apart from his dream the fact had no special significance. She had written to him at intervals since he left her, little pleading notes, with nothing remarkable about them except their single-hearted humility and adoration. Evidently no tidings of his renewed attentions to her cousin had reached her. As a matter of prudence he had never written a word in reply. The last interval had been longer, and, so far as he had had time to think about her at all, he had thought that she

was probably getting tired of her fruitless worship. The moth's poor little wings were beating more freely. It was a vexatious chance which had brought this last letter on his wedding-day, unless perhaps she had heard the news at last, and was crying at Ballyvarry over her lost dream.

As soon as he was at liberty he took it up, and negligently tore it open. At the first glance he changed colour. It was dated some two or three weeks earlier, and it began :

"MY DEAREST,—I shall never write to you again, for this will not be sent to you till I am dead."

Mr. Langley stopped short and sat down, feeling as if his dream were coming back to him in broad daylight. Then he went on:

"I felt I could not die without bidding you good-bye for ever. I suppose I ought not to write to you again, for I have heard that you are going to marry my cousin"—she had begun to write "Rose," and then had marked it out, as if she could not bear a woman's name upon the page—"but I must, just for this last time. I cannot die without a word, though I have never had a word from you. It would have been better never to write, but I could not help it; it was the only thing that made me feel a little nearer to you. If you had written only once!—but you were right. You never could have loved me, I knew it from the first.

"So you see, dearest, I was not deceived; I have nothing to reproach you with, and you must never reproach yourself. You could not prevent my loving you. I know you will be sorry when you hear that I am dead—you are so good—but you cannot miss me much; and do not think that it was your fault; I never was very strong, and I caught cold last winter. I did not say so when I wrote, because I thought you would not want to hear about that. I only tell you now that you may know that it was months ago that I was ill first. They thought I was better, and that I was going to get well, but I know I never shall. They don't understand how hard it is to get well. I can't do it; it seems as if I had not the heart to go on living. I think one had need be very strong to do that.

"I do not wish to live, and yet I am frightened when I think about dying. I feel as if my life were like a little candle going out in the dark. Everything seems dark now, but it was all sunshine that day

when you were here; I fancy it must always be sunshine where you are. When I look back, I think that there never was any happiness in my life till you came and brought it. Those two dear days, you do not know how happy they were! My two days! I hoped I should get well, because then I might perhaps have had just one more, but now I know it cannot be. Only two days in all my life, and you gave them to me!

"Good-bye, my dearest. It seems to me that I have said nothing at all, and now I cannot write more; it is too late. Once more, good-bye. Do not be too sorry for me. Even the dying will all be over before you read this, and I am not altogether unhappy. It has been my happiness to love you and pray for you. Good-bye.

"E. H."

And then, below the signature, was yet one more "Good-bye."

Philip Langley sat staring blankly at the paper with contracted brows. He was startled and unnerved. The strange coincidence of the letter and his dream had so impressed him that the one seemed as real as the other, and for the moment he could hardly have told whether he had actually touched the girl's dead hands and lips or not. The paper trembled in his fingers, and the lines stood out with curious distinctness.

Reproaches would not have touched him, but this tender eagerness to save him from self-reproach cut him to the quick. He knew that what she had written was literally true. Her happiness had been in his power to give or to withhold, and he had given her—what had he given her? A few smooth words, base coin, paid many times before for smiles and kisses. It made him sick to think how often he had used those ready speeches, and how empty and degraded they were. He had spoken them again, and then he had parted from her with the lightest and most contemptuous of caresses, and a promise which he never meant to keep. And for that she had gone into the great darkness, blessing him and praying for him. It was a jest for a devil to laugh at. But, for his own part, he felt that he would have given anything to be able to call her back for one moment—only one—not to excuse himself, but to kneel before her, to take her hands in his, and kiss them humbly. Then he would loosen his clasp, and let her go into eternity, with just a word of farewell: "All else was false, but

this is true." If he could do that! But what folly even to fancy it!

It is impossible to say how long he might have remained in his dreary reverie, had not his servant come to the door to warn him that it was nearly eleven o'clock, and that the ceremony was fixed for half-past. The man stopped short in the middle of his sentence.

"Are you ill, sir?" he asked wonderingly.

Mr. Langley stared at him for a moment, and then recovered himself.

"Yes," he said; "get me a glass of brandy."

His successful marriage seemed to him just then the most hideous dream of all; but it was too late to think of that, too late to think of anything, except that he must on no account keep Miss Willing waiting at the church.

How the next hour passed he hardly knew, but it did pass, and he was Rose's husband. His bride had cast one or two anxious glances at him, and, as they stood in the vestry, she whispered hurriedly:

"What is the matter? You are awfully white, and your hands are quite cold."

He told some ready little lie about a headache; he forced himself to laugh and talk; he drank champagne at the breakfast, and became more natural and less tragically pale; he made a remarkably neat speech for his wife and himself, with Emma's letter of farewell in his pocket all the time, and with a curious fancy in his mind that, behind the smiling faces which crowded about him, there must surely lurk some perception of that miserable story.

As a matter of course these shadowy impressions wore off as the day went by. But that evening, Rose, who had been looking meditatively at the window for a minute or two, turned suddenly and asked him:

"Do you remember Emma Harrison?"

He was on his guard.

"Seeing how often you have reminded me of the evening when I met her at your house, I certainly do," he replied.

"Poor little thing!" said Rose, eyeing him more from habit than from any real suspicion. "She is dead."

"You don't say so!" he exclaimed, and then echoed her "Poor little thing!" as naturally as possible.

"Yes," said Rose; "mamma had a letter this morning, and she told me just before we came away."

"She might have left it till to-morrow, I think," the bridegroom remarked.

"Oh, but I don't suppose she could," said Rose, with a little laugh, like Mrs. Willing's own. "Mamma can't keep a bit of news to herself, don't you know that? I'm only thankful she didn't let it out before we went to church. It would have been very horrid if she had."

"Very," he assented.

"I hope it isn't unlucky to hear a thing like that on one's wedding-day. I don't mean that I was especially fond of Emma—I never was," Rose continued with smiling candour. "I don't think one is bound to be fond of one's cousins, do you? She was always such a shy, stupid little thing—not a bit of style about her. It wasn't wonderful—you can't think what a dreary little hole she lived in all her life."

"I think I can fancy it," he said.

"Oh, you mean by what you saw of her that evening? I'm afraid you had a dull time of it, poor fellow! you were punished for being so cross," said Rose, well pleased. She was aware that she herself had looked her best that day, and she felt her immeasurable superiority to Emma very keenly. "But it is very sad," she added after a pause; "isn't it curious, Philip, that she and I should be cousins, and that my wedding and her funeral should be on the same day?"

"Well," he began, "we are most of us cousins to somebody, and considering the number of weddings and funerals——"

"Oh, don't be so dreadfully precise, to-day of all days!" Mrs. Philip Langley exclaimed, pouting a little. She had a vague idea that a happy inaccuracy would have been more suitable to their circumstances. "I know all about that; if you only talk long enough you can make out that anything is quite likely, of course. But all the same it is very strange when it happens to one's self, you know."

"Why, of course it is," he said, drawing her towards him, and looking down at her with his most lover-like gaze.

Later, when he found himself alone for a few minutes, he took the letter from his pocket, and stood turning it in his hands. He could not keep it. Suppose anything should happen to him, and Rose and Mrs. Willing should talk it over, and show it to their gossiping friends, and laugh at the poor little unrequited love; or if not Rose, someone else might find it, and it seemed to him that no eyes ought ever to read those words, unless they could see the girl's eyes looking out from the written page as

he saw them. The letter must certainly be destroyed. And yet, again, it was like a kind of murder, to silence that dying utterance of love.

Still, it had to be done, and as he stood there holding it, he tasted the full bitterness of vain remorse. His heart was sore with pity for his victim and sullen anger at his own destiny. He had killed her, and for what?

What had the passion he had awakened been to him? Nothing! It had given him no happiness—not much amusement; it had just served to pass a few dull hours, as a novel might. He had touched so many hearts, that there could be nothing really new in one more conquest. This poor heart had yielded itself a little more readily than others, was a little more sensitive, throbbed more quickly under his experiments—that was all. There was no other difference—nothing which could class it apart from the rest.

She would gladly have died for him. He knew it; but he knew also that she could not have made him happy for a moment. She had said truly. He never could have loved her.

It had been nothing to him. But to her—what had it not been to her? He crushed the paper in a fierce clasp. If he could have had but one heart-beat of the passionate love which he had taught her, it would have outweighed all the cheap successes that were the harvest of his life. She was the happy one, after all!

He bent his head and kissed the letter once, before he laid it on the hearth and burned it. As it flamed up and then died out, he seemed to see her little life burning and fading as she had said. Rose had told him that she had been buried that day, and he remembered with a pang how he had refused to go with her for a few minutes into the churchyard where she was now lying for ever. He determined to return some day to Ballyvarry and stand by her grave. The chances were that he never would, but the passing thought was in itself a kind of pilgrimage.

The letter was only rustling tinder, with red sparks running here and there, but he watched till the last should die, thinking to himself that had she known how sharp a stab her farewell would be to him on his marriage-morning, she would not have sent it.

Perhaps he was right. Yet Emma was neither heroine nor angel, and it is hard for a woman to go away without a last

glance from the man she loves, whatever the cost may be.

Let that be as it might, all was over, and of his double conquest there remained to Mr. Langley the black and grey ashes at his feet, and Rose with her three thousand a year.

### TRIBOULET THE FOOL.

THE other day turning over "Quentin Durward," the mention of the fool, Le Glorieux, made me turn to the notes, one of which reminded me of the court fools of mediæval times, and of the age of the Renaissance—or, should it not be Renaissance? Many anecdotes of these latter are preserved in the numerous contemporary memoirs, especially the French.

The fool of Charles the Bold, however, is not one of those whose wit and wisdom have been preserved, and as to that of Louis the Eleventh, the note which we have mentioned will explain how it happened, as Brantome says: "*Il passa le pas comme les autres, de peur qu'en réitérant il feust scandalisé davantage.*" Brantome adds that he had heard the story fifty years before from an old canon of eighty, and if the story is true that the jester repeated publicly what the king had said privately at his orisons, it is no wonder that he met his fate. Louis was precisely the man to punish such an offence. The story, however, is not without its impugnors, who certainly appear to have something on their side. The official fool, as a rule, was no fool, and none but a born idiot would have ventured so to outrage ordinary common-sense.

But this unlucky wight appears to have been the only one who graced the court of the grim king, and his name even is unknown.

Louis's successor is known to have conferred the dignity on someone, from official documents, but no name is recorded. These, too, show that the Queen Anne had a female fool of her own, whose expenses are duly entered.

In the time of Francis the First there happened to be two fools, whose names are often to be found in memoirs, records, and allusions of that date—Caillette and Triboulet. The former does not appear to have been officially attached to the court, and appears to have been simply of weak intellect, to judge from the stories which are related of him. The name itself shows



the estimation in which he was held at the time, and we are inclined to agree with the bibliophile Jacob, that the connection is evident between a fool and a quail which is for ever cackling. Marot, writing in 1515, says, if ever he is in love he will agree to be called Caillette. His portrait is to be found, too, in the well-known *Ship of Fools* of Sebastian Brandt, that extraordinary book which made the tour of Europe in a very short time, and retained its popularity for nearly a century after its publication in 1497. Many anecdotes are related of him, not one however of which is worth repeating, though at the time they were thought to be very good. But times are altered now, and, truth to say, our ancestors were easily pleased.

Triboulet is known, by name at least, to many, as the hero of Victor Hugo's play, *Le Roi s'Amuse*. The jester of the play, however, is purely an ideal being; nothing whatever in actual fact is to be found to agree with the character of the dramatist. The real Triboulet, as far as can be ascertained, died at about thirty years of age, and could not, therefore, even if he had been married, have had a daughter of marriageable age. Hugo simply found a powerful situation, and gave his character a name which was well known to those acquainted with the history of the court of Francis.

It appears to have been the custom to give the fool a nickname, as we have seen in the case of Caillette. From the researches of M. Jal we learn that Triboulet's real name was Nicolas Fevrial, Ferial, or Le Fevrial, according to whichever spelling one may incline, for in two documents it is spelt all three ways, and, as everyone knows, in the sixteenth century orthography was very shaky, especially in proper names. He appears to have been in office under Charles the Twelfth, and to have passed into the service of his successor, Francis. He must have been young, little more than a boy, and possibly of somewhat weak intellect. We find in the accounts of the disbursements for the royal household, payments from time to time to the governor of Triboulet, an official whose duty it was to look after his welfare, and especially to protect him against the malice of the pages, who of course never lost an opportunity of making sport out of him. He was born at Foiz les Blois, where "to be as silly as Triboulet" was proverbial in the time of Bernier, whose history of Blois was published in 1682. But later researches

lead us to believe that the young Ferial was an innocent taken out of the streets at an early age by the tender-hearted king. Something lacking in his composition there was, no doubt, and, probably, if he had not been taken care of he would have followed the usual ways of those unhappy mortals doomed to wander on the streets, and afford sport for the thoughtless and brutal. But the instruction of a governor, the refinement of a court, the insensible influence of his surroundings, might, and doubtless did, improve what there was in him of sense. At any rate he played his part well. According to Marot, his contemporary, he was as wise at thirty as the day he was born. He had a large head, small forehead, big eyes, enormous aquiline nose, small chest, and was hump-backed. But he was incapable of serious thought. There was something short in him, as the saying is; he was a daft body, but without a spark of malice in his composition, and so pleasant and agreeable as never to offend those against whom he had directed his aim. As a court official, in discharge of his duty he accompanied the king to the wars, and was present at the siege of Peschiera in 1509.

Here again we have Jean Marot telling us that Triboulet was so afraid of cannon that he slunk under his bed, and would have been there now if he had not been dragged out. The poet then makes the reflection that it is not wonderful that the wise fear the shocks which terrify the innocent and fools. However, as the poet goes on to say that the fire was so brisk that the French soldiers dared not raise their heads above the trenches, the fool may be pardoned for his timidity.

When Francis came to the throne, the fool was about twenty, and having profited by the lessons of his governor, Michel le Vernoy, he henceforwards becomes a personage such as we are accustomed to figure to ourselves as the typical fool of a court. He has the right of free speech, the bounds of which are only limited by common-sense; he can make game of his master and all his court, not only without offence, but with applause. Bonaventure des Periers gives us many anecdotes of him, most of which will not bear repetition, either from inherent grossness, or from want of a point that would be perceptible to this age. One day the king entering the Sainte Chapelle to hear vespers, Triboulet noticed the deep silence.

When all were seated the bishop began the service, the choir responded, and soon thunder outside could not have been heard. The fool got up and rushed to the bishop, and began to assault him furiously. In reply to the king, who enquired how he could think of laying hands on the holy man, all he could say was, "When we got in here, cousin, everything was quiet; this man began the row—he's the one to be punished." This exploit made some noise at the time, as well it might.

The real repute of the jester, however, may be inferred from the number of anecdotes attributed to him. It is extremely probable that he is guiltless of most of them. Some of them certainly seem to be the common property of the wits of all periods. Perhaps the best known, for it is one which will bear repeating, is the following:

"A great lord, offended at his sallies, threatened to flog him to death. Triboulet went to complain to his master. 'If he does it,' said the king, 'I'll hang him in a quarter of an hour after.' 'Thank ye, cousin,' said the fool; 'but if it's all the same, couldn't you do it a quarter of an hour before?'"

Nothing could be better than this in its way, and it is not impossible that it might come from one of weak intellect. But he was not wanting in common-sense either, if we are to believe what Dreux du Radier relates of him. He had tablets on which he carefully noted down everything which seemed worthy of himself. The king had an urgent letter to send to Rome, but found no courier to take it, as the time was not sufficient. At last, however, one appeared, who guaranteed to deliver the paper in the time specified. He mounted his horse, and received two thousand ducats. The fool was observed busy with his tablets; and the king wanted to know what he was writing. "It's impossible to get to Rome in the time, and it's foolish to give two thousand ducats when a quarter would be enough," said Triboulet; "here goes your name." "Ah," said the monarch, "but suppose he doesn't get there in time and I get my money back, where will you be then?" "In that case," said the fool, "I rub out your name and insert his."

This is a very pretty story as it stands, but a regard for truth compels one to doubt its attribution being correct. It is undoubtedly one of the stories always current, of no certain authorship, which are given to this or that wit of the current

period. Scott, using the privilege of the novelist, boldly fathers it on Le Glorieux, when the king insists on taking up his quarters in the Château of Peronne, the head-quarters of his insubordinate vassal. We will not copy this, but let the intelligent reader find it out for himself; he will then have the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with Quentin Durward. Bouchet, in his *Sereés*, tells the same story of a Duke of Milan, who gave to a Moor, whom he had only known eight days, thirty thousand ducats to go and buy horses in Barbary. The duke enquired why his servant was putting him in his list of fools. It is not difficult here to supply question and reply. Again we meet with it on the occasion of Charles the Fifth visiting Paris, and being entertained by Francis. The fool remarks he will give his bauble to the emperor, and when his master repudiates the idea of treachery to his guest, merely observes that the gift shall be bestowed on him. There is another version that the remark was made when Charles asked and was granted a free passage through France, in order to get more quickly to Ghent, which was in revolt. This, however, could not have been the rightful occasion, for Triboulet had been dead several years in 1539, the date of this occurrence. There is another anecdote attributed to him which will bear repetition. Before the campaign, which ended so disastrously at Pavia, a banquet was held, at which the chief topic was the best way of entering Italy. Naturally each had its partisans, and the real difficulty was to decide. The fool remarked: "Gentlemen, you have spoken well, but you seem to have forgotten the essential point, for no one has said anything about it." "What is that?" said the king. "Why," replied Triboulet, "how are you to get back? You surely don't intend to stop there for ever." Here is a very pretty illustration of the proverb, that many a true word is spoken in jest.

But whether rightly or wrongly these and other anecdotes are attributed to Triboulet, his name will never be forgotten enshrined as it is by Rabelais. It will be remembered that Panurge, being very much exercised in mind about marriage, asked advice from all sorts and conditions of men. "Triboulet," quoth Pantagruel, "is completely foolish as I conceive." "Yes, truly," answered Panurge, "he is properly and totally a fool," and then

follows the wearisome list of adjectives which might be applied to a fool. However, Triboulet was asked to come from Blois, and arrived accordingly. "Panurge at his arrival gave him a hog's bladder puffed up with wind, and resounding because of the hard peas within it. Moreover, he did present him with a gilt wooden sword, a hollow budget made of a tortoise-shell, an osier wattled wicker bottle full of Breton wine, and five-and-twenty apples of Blandureau. Triboulet girded the sword and scrip to his side, took the bladder in his hand, ate some of the apples, and drank the wine. Panurge looked on wistly, and when the drinking was done, expounded his business, wherein he asked his advice in choicest and elegant rhetoric. But before he had done, Triboulet gave him a thump between the shoulders, handed him the bottle, leathered him with the bladder, and shaking his head gave him for all reply: 'Pardi, mad fool, beware the monk, Buzancay bagpipe.' This done, he went off playing with the bladder, and enjoying the delectable music of the peas, and not another word could be got from him. But, Panurge wishing further speech, Triboulet drew his wooden sword, and was for striking him with it. 'Marry,' quoth Panurge, 'I have brought my pigs to a fine market. He is a great fool that is not to be denied, yet he is a greater fool who brought him hither to me; but of the three I am the greatest fool to impart my secret thoughts to such an idiot, ass, and ninny.'" If our readers will look up this extract in the original, they will find much interesting reading in this and the following chapters. There is little doubt that if circumstances had not thrown Rabelais into another sphere of action, he would have played the court fool to perfection.

### AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

By THEO GIFT.

#### CHAPTER X.

IT was late on the day of Captain Pen-treath's examination before the magistrates. Dusk, the early dusk of a winter's afternoon, had long since fallen, and the gas-lamps were glimmering redly through the raw grey twilight, when a woman came swiftly round the corner of a long dreary street in one of the worst parts of the west end of London.

It was not exactly a disreputable street. It began, indeed, respectably enough with mediocre, shabby-genteel houses opening out of the Uxbridge Road on the northern outskirts of Holland Park; but as it went on the houses became smaller, poorer, and more squalid—the street itself grew narrower and dirtier. Gin-palaces and coffee-taverns glared at each other across a vista of small greengrocers', rag and bottle shops, and common lodging-houses.

Finally it split in two, and while one half ran up against a dead wall and a pig-stye, and ended there, the other narrowed still more, and became a mere lane leading into that wide district of vice, squalor, and misery, that haunt of navvies, gipsies, and brickmakers, known vaguely to the respectable public, and only too familiarly to the neighbouring police, as the "Potteries."

It was from the direction of this latter place that the woman in question was coming, but there was nothing either vicious or squalid in her appearance. On the contrary, she was tall, neat, and not ill-looking, with a thin, fresh-coloured face, very smooth hair, and bright dark eyes which shone out with a very resolute expression from the depths of a huge bonnet of coarse black straw. Her dress was also black, neatly made, and of good material, but enlivened at the throat and wrists by a couple of broad scarlet bands, giving it something of a military appearance, while as she walked along, keeping not on the pavement, but in the middle of the street, she was singing in a loud, rather musical voice, a verse of a strange sort of hymn.

"Come rally round the flag, boys,

To battle now we go;

Cry, three times three, 'Hurrah!' boys,

For Satan is the foe."

All around her, following and at times almost smothering her as they pressed at her side and crowded on her heels, was a motley throng composed of grimy, half-naked, little street Arabs; brutal, unwashed youths of the costermonger class; and a few rough-looking, flaunting girls; and these laughed, cheered, and danced about, yelling out choruses which not infrequently belonged to melodies breathing a very different spirit to the hymn, and in a way which would have impelled most modest and respectable women to hasty and immediate flight. The young woman in question, however, did not seem to mind it. Sometimes, indeed, she stopped short and wheeled round, facing the rowdiest of her followers, to the chief amongst whom

she would hold out her clean, well-shaped hand, and address a few words of exhortation, spoken in a bright eager way, and winding up with an invitation to go and hear General Booth at the Portobello Road Salvation Hall on the following night. Sometimes she would step out briskly to the right or left, and taking a tract from a parcel which she carried under her arm, offer it to one of the passers-by on the side-walk, and whenever they came to a public-house, which in this neighbourhood happened very frequently, she and all her company came to a full stop while she lifted a little red flag which she carried high above her head, and cried out in a clear ringing voice, "Halt! An outpost of the devil! Fix bayonets and sound the battle-cry—Glory, hallelujah!" the last words in a shout echoed by the greater part of her audience with a vigour which brought out most of the drunkards or idlers in the bar to see what was up. Directly this was achieved, however, she burst into another verse of the hymn, and wheeling, marched on, still singing vigorously, and, in the generality of cases, with the addition of two or three of the gin-drinkers to the train of her existing followers.

All through the day it had been raining hard, and the streets were a slop of wet and mud, while a bitter north wind swept round the corners, freezing noses and fingers with its damp and icy breath, and nearly taking some of the smaller members of the army off their legs; but though the woman leading them had been out all the afternoon, traversing the "Potteries" from end to end in the work of beating up recruits; and though, during all that time, she had never ceased to speak or sing, and had never once sat down or rested, her eyes were the brightest, her step the lightest of the whole number. And once, when in crossing a street a half-tipsy follower of the army came into rough collision with a young girl who was trying to cross the road before them, and flung his arm round her waist, the victim—a slender little creature with a pretty childish face—had hardly time to utter one cry before the Salvation captain had turned and, seizing the brute by the wrist, gave it such a wrench as set his captive free on the instant.

"Why, missis," said the fellow surlily, "what's that for? I was just bringin' yer in a lamb to the fold."

"Aye, indeed? And what are you, my man?" said the captain briskly.

"Why, what else but a bloomin' lamb, too, my lass," was the answer, capped instantly by:

"Just so; but lambs don't bring each other into the fold. That's the sheep-dog's work, and I'm sheep-dog now, so come, child,

"Come and join the army.  
We want a girl like you.  
Oh, come and shout for—"

But before the invitation, caught up in full chorus, had got so far, the girl appealed to had taken to her heels and fled with such swiftness that she was already out of sight; while the army being now almost in front of "the fold," i.e., a small mission-room, with a bright glow of gas and fire, and long tables set with smoking tin cans, visible through the open door, the captain gave up the idea of a fresh recruit, and inviting her companions to shout "Glory, hallelujah!" three times, led them in.

She did not stay, however, to assist at the tea and prayer meeting which followed, or even to get any rest or refreshment herself; but after reporting herself to a commanding officer of the male sex, and exchanging a few words with one or two "Hallelujah Lasses" in the room, slipped quietly through the throng, and letting herself out by a side door, walked swiftly away.

Her manner was quite altered now. She had put on a thick plaid shawl over her black and scarlet gown, and as she passed quickly and silently along, keeping her head down, and further sheltering herself; from the rain, which had again begun to fall, under a big umbrella, there was nothing in her appearance to distinguish her from any other decent middle-class woman, or connect her with the noisy apostle who had passed that way only half an hour before.

She had not far to go. Ten minutes' walk brought her out on the broad, well-lighted thoroughfare of the Uxbridge Road, and after keeping along it for a few hundred yards she stopped at a large ironmonger's shop, and, knocking at the private door, was at once admitted.

"You're late, Jane," said the person who did so, a rather older and sharper-visaged edition of herself; "tea is over, and father is so cross."

"Is he? I'm sorry, Ju, but I walked as quick as ever I could, and you don't generally begin tea till six."

"Yes we do—on chapel nights. Did you forget this was one? If so, don't tell



father; for what made him so angry was hearing a lot of shouting at the back of the house some while ago. That idiot of an Ellen said it was the Salvation Army, and that, and your not being here, made father so wild I believe he'll expound on it to-night. You'd better stay at home, Jane."

"Oh no, that would make him worse; but I must have a cup of tea first. Do ask Ellen to make me one;" and only waiting to hang up her bonnet and shawl in the narrow oil-clothed entry, she passed on into the parlour at the back of the house.

It was a large room just behind the shop, comfortably furnished, the windows hung with curtains of good red damask, and the walls with paper of the same colour, and decorated with sundry photographs of leading Methodist divines, and one or two large and very black engravings of "The Opening of the Seventh Vial," and other similarly cheerful subjects, in polished maple frames; while the mahogany furniture and florid Brussels carpet, with a piece of oilcloth tacked over the centre of it to preserve its pristine freshness, bore witness to the fact of the owner being well-to-do in the business which forty years ago he had received from his father before him.

He was seated in an armchair by the fire now, a thin, fragile, little old man of over seventy, wearing a black velvet skull-cap on his bald head, and holding in one hand a gold watch and chain which he held up angrily as his daughter entered, saying:

"Half-past six, Jane, and tea over before you come in. Nice doin's—nice doin's for a young woman of thirty-three! I was just saying to your sister, I supposed by midnight you'd be making your appearance. After that I'd not let the door be open for no one. No, not for my own children if they chose to forsake their homes and take to 'riotous living' like the son of that afflicted father in the gospel. But even he came in to meals; for, as we know, a calf was roasted for him; and, seeing as his elder brother was still out at work, it couldn't yet have been sundown. Read Luke, chapter fifteen, verse thirty."

"Yes, father dear," said Jane meekly; "but it's not midnight now, and if we were in Israel I doubt if 'twould even be sundown; but I'm very sorry to be late all the same. I didn't mean to be."

"Mean! What's the good of meaning when you are so? And is it one of your new Salvationist doctrines to browbeat and

argue with your old father, as if he were a small child in a jography class? Jane, Jane, I'd have you remember what the Word says, 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection,' and do it. Read First Epistle to Timothy, chapter two, verse two. But there, all decent, godly ways are altered in these days when fathers have to hold their peace while young women take to dancing and yelling about the streets, and calling it religion. Ugh! Give me my hat and coat, child, and say no more. We ought to be at chapel now."

Mr. Matthew Thompson belonged to what might emphatically be called a "serious family." There had been five of them originally, a father and four sons, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these Luke died early, and Mark and John entered regularly into the service of religion, joined the Wesleyan body, and went out as missionaries, one to India and the other to Africa; while Matthew remained at home, succeeded his father in the iron-mongery business, thrived wonderfully, married, and built a chapel for the Primitive Methodists, of which connexion he had always been a member, was made first deacon and then elder; and now, in his old age, enjoyed nothing more than hearing himself hold forth on Wednesday evenings before his own family and a select number of fellow-worshippers, whose admiring groans kept pace and tune with his discourse.

He was a widower at present with three daughters, Judith and Jane, whom we have seen, and an elder one, Deborah, who went out to India to join her uncle John and convert the heathen, but fell in love en route with the first mate of the Indiaman, and ended by converting him instead, and to such good purpose that she was now the wife of a P. and O. captain, living in a handsome villa at Devonport, and much looked up to by her neighbours and relations.

Jane's defalcation into the ranks of the Salvationists had been a sore blow at home, being taken in the light of a deliberate slight and injury by old Mr. Thompson, whose favourite child she was; and who, as an elder of the church, and having a decided weakness for decency and order in all walks of life, felt very much as a country rector might do whose eldest son had taken to preaching at a Dissenting chapel in his father's village.

As an old friend of the family said, however: "What else could you expect

from one of the Thompsons? They'd all got the Light, and they was bound to show it for themselves one way or another. Look at John, with a wife and twelve children to provide for; and poor Mrs. John spending her life on the high seas, travelling to and fro with one or other of 'em—what an elect vessel he was! Why, The Madras Christian went into mourning down a whole column when he died; and there were two of his sons missionaries now; and his eldest daughter married to a Scotch minister, with her only boy a Bible-reader in Aberdeen. And look at Mark, burying his wife and child out among the niggers, and then only coming back to bring home his little granddaughter, before going out again and dying there like the rest. That child of his, Esther, hadn't done well, indeed, having been so led away as to fall in love with and marry a mere man-o'-war officer, a fine fly-away gentleman, and one of the carnal-minded; but she had expiated her fault by dying very speedily afterwards, and so one wouldn't wish to be hard on her; while, as for the little girl, no one could say the Thompsons hadn't done their duty by her. Didn't Mrs. John take her from her grandfather and educate her with her own younger children, she being in England just then for that purpose? And wouldn't she have left her and Mary at school together when she had to go back to India herself if that ungrateful ne'er-do-weel, the father, hadn't turned up and carried the child off to make a worldling of her like himself, and a fine lady into the bargain? She was probably a lost sheep altogether now; but it couldn't be helped; and, after all, the Matthew Thompsons had never had anything to do with her. Mrs. John (for all that she was such a godly woman and one of the elect) holding herself rather high, and making a deal of excuse out of living at Deal to keep her own family and the little Esther from much visiting at the ironmonger's shop in the Uxbridge Road."

That respectable household was just going to bed at present. Chapel, at which old Matthew had discoursed with unusual unction, bringing hot blushes to poor Jane's cheeks by his allusions to the "indecent and scandalous behaviour of certain so-called religionists in the neighbourhood," was over, and, having had his supper, and enjoyed a talk over the fire, while his daughters stitched and listened dutifully, the old man had retired upstairs,

Judith accompanying him to see to his bedroom fire, while Jane remained below to put out the gas and see that the house was properly bolted up for the night, when, just as she had descended to the basement to look to the fastenings there, she was startled by one loud single knock at the front door.

For a moment she hesitated whether to answer it or not. It was late—nearly eleven o'clock. Besides, the knock had a heavy blundering sound, as though it had been dealt at random by some drunken passer. As she stood, however, in the entry below, candle in hand, and doubtful whether to go up or remain where she was, the knock was repeated twice over, and louder than before, and without more ado Jane ran upstairs and began to unbolt and unbar the front door, which only a few moments previously she had herself fastened up for the night. As she did so, and got it open, such a rush of wind and rain came in as drove her backwards and extinguished her candle, preventing her for the moment from distinguishing anything but a dark object like a cab drawn up outside, while a gruff voice asked:

"Is this 'ere Mr. Thompson's private door?"

"Yes, it is," Jane answered, sheltering herself behind it as she spoke. "What do you want?"

The gruff voice repeated the first part of her answer to someone in the cab, adding, for her benefit:

"It's a young lady as belongs here. The gent's helping her out. I should ha' got here sooner, but I missed the corner an' druv too far."

"A young lady! Oh, but it's a mistake. It must be some other Thompson. There's no young lady expected here," Jane said quickly, but stopped short and nearly uttered a cry, for by this time the gentleman—who appeared by his dress to be a clergyman—had extricated a slender girlish figure from the cab, and, as the two emerged from the wet and darkness, Jane saw, by the dim light of a gas-lamp outside, a small pale face looking eagerly up into hers, and recognised in it the girl whom, earlier in the same evening, she had rescued from the clutch of that ill-behaved follower of her little army.

And the man who was with her was worse than any ordinary clergyman, being a Romish priest whom she also knew by sight as having a church somewhere in the

neighbourhood, and as being often to be met with among the slums and purlieus of the Potteries.

Jane Thompson was a brave woman, but at the sight her courage nearly failed her, and for an instant she had a wild thought of banging the door in their faces, and taking refuge under her bed, for the thought which flashed upon her was that it was a police case, and that this priest of Baal was backing the young woman up in it to injure the Salvation cause; and oh, what would father say?—he who cared so much for respectability, and was always predicting that some of her proceedings would bring him into disrepute. In imagination she had time to see her whole career spoilt, and herself sent off in disgrace to her rich sister in Devonport, even while the priest was asking:

“Are you a Miss Thompson?”

But at the sound of his voice her courage came back, and she even came a step forward, blocking up the door as she answered him sharply enough:

“Yes, I am; but I don’t know you, or this young woman either. What do you want with me?”

The girl put out her little gloved hands with a quick, appealing gesture. She was trembling from head to foot, soaked with rain, and her voice was little more than a whisper.

“I am your cousin—Esther,” she said. “Don’t you remember me? I used to live with Aunt John at Deal when I was a little girl, and I remember you quite well. You are—surely you are Jane, are not you?”

“Yes, I am Jane,” said the Salvation captain blankly.

The surprise and relief were so great that she could hardly collect herself. Then, with fuller comprehension:

“But—little Esther! Uncle Mark’s granddaughter! You don’t mean it. Come in—come in out of the rain quickly.”

She put out her strong hand, and grasped the girl’s frozen fingers warmly, drawing her into the passage. For the moment she had forgotten the priest, and he had already stepped back.

“It is all right then?” he said to Hetty, speaking in a kind, brisk manner, “and I can leave you safely? I’m glad of it, so good-night, my child, and God bless you! No, no, nonsense!” as the girl turned from her cousin and clasped his hand, pouring out eager and almost tearful thanks in a weak, tremulous voice; “I did no more for you

than anyone should do for a fellow-creature. Good-bye.”

And he was gone.

Jane shut the hall-door with a bang, and took her cousin’s hand again.

“Esther,” she said solemnly, “I don’t know how you got into such company; but if father had seen me with that man of Belial, I doubt he would hardly have kept me under his roof afterwards. You shall tell me about it; but say nothing to him when you see him, and come in. You’re heartily welcome, for all that your visit’s so late and unexpected a one. Why, child, you’re wet to the bone!”

And, indeed, the rain was dripping heavily off Hetty’s black skirt, and all her pretty curling hair was gummed and plastered together with wet, while there was not a tinge of colour in the little face, at which Judith, who had heard the knock and come down to see what was the matter, was now staring in amazement. Her manner, however, was kind enough when Jane made her understand who it was.

“Cousin Esther’s child? Her that died abroad? Why to be sure, so you are, and I remember you now, though you’re so altered. But I thought you were being brought up by some grand friends of your father’s?”

“Yes, cousin,” said Hetty timidly. Judith’s sharp face and voice frightened her, and she was shivering with cold and nervousness, for it was so long since she had seen any of her mother’s relations that they were like strangers to her, “and I should not have come without writing; but I was only the lady’s companion, and something happened. She—she was not kind to me, and I did not know what to do. I was in great trouble, and I came away. I—I could not help it.”

Her voice, which had been growing hoarser and weaker, broke down altogether, and she sank down suddenly on to a chair, bursting into violent weeping. Judith held up her hands.

“Did you ever!” she exclaimed. “Why, child, what’s the matter, and where have you been to get in this state? Jane, she’s like a drowned rat.”

Jane put her hand on her sister’s shoulder and pushed her gently aside.

“I’m going to put her to bed,” she said. “She’s not fit to talk now, and, Judith, heat up the kettle and make a good hot glass of brandy-and-water. It’s an accursed thing usually—I hope Esther thinks so, but when folks are wet and ill—

Come, dear, don't you cry so. I'll give you a share of my bed to-night, and you shall tell us your story in the morning, when father's here to listen to it too."

She put her arm round Hetty as she spoke, and half helped, half led her upstairs to her own room, where she put the girl into a low chair, and bidding her take off her wet boots, began opening drawers and getting out articles of dry underclothing for her. But when they were got, poor Hetty was too spent even to stand up, far less to put them on unaided. Her head had drooped till it rested on the arm of the chair, and she was still shivering all over, but she said faintly that it was nothing, and she was not ill, only cold and tired—so very tired. And Jane fairly lifted her up in her strong arms, undressed her, and had got her into bed before Judith came in with the brandy-and-water, and a little tray of refreshments.

Hetty, however, was unable to touch the latter. She tried to do so, rather than seem ungracious to her cousins; but something in her throat seemed to prevent her swallowing, and it was with great difficulty that she could even take the hot drink. It seemed to revive her, however, for she smiled and said "Thank you" gratefully. Then, with another effort: "I must tell you—I am better now—how I came. It was Cousin Mary, Aunt John's daughter, I was going to see. She had written to me some time ago to tell me of her marriage, and ask me—but I was not allowed to go, and then, to-day, when I went—it was all the way to Brixton—she was not there. The house was empty, and no one knew—I could not find her."

"Find her? Why no, I should think not," cried Judith. "Mary and her husband left for Liverpool six weeks ago. He'd got the offer of a post as organist to a big church there. I wonder she didn't tell you. You poor child, you've had quite a journey over here then!"

Hetty looked up at her. Her voice was getting weaker and more husky.

"I did not know what to do. I had come a long way, and I had had no breakfast. It was very early. I went to a baker's shop and got some bread, and then I took a cab. I meant to come to you. I did not know the address, but I thought it was Uxbridge Road—and then I missed my bag. The cabman said I must have left it at the baker's, but it was not there,

and my purse was in it. I had no money left—not a penny. I walked on and on; but it rained—it was raining all the time."

"You walked from Brixton!" cried Judith. Jane was too pitiful for speech.

"Not all the way. I had a little ring of mamma's, and a woman in a shop lent me half-a-crown for it. That took me to Uxbridge Road Station, but I was afraid to spend it all. I thought I would walk on again and enquire. People sent me backwards and forwards. There were so many Thompsons, and none of them knew. I got quite to despair; and it was getting late. It was dusk. Once when I was crossing a street a tipsy man caught hold of me. I was so frightened I ran till I was tired. There was a church close by with a deep porch and a bench in it; and beside the door a little window through which one could see the church inside, and a lamp burning before the altar. It was so quiet there I did not feel frightened any more; and it was sheltered too. I thought I would stay there all night, and I sat down on the bench and fell asleep. It was the priest woke me. He was coming back from a sick call, and he was very kind. He got a directory, and found out where there was an ironmonger's shop with the name; and then he brought me here. If—if I may stay to-night—"

Her voice had become quite inaudible, and Jane bade her go to sleep at once; but long after her eyes were closed the cousins sat by her bed watching her. They had time now to recognise the extreme beauty of the fair little face in its framing of dark, shining curls, the tiny white hands, and the fine texture of her black cashmere frock, with its dainty rufflings of lace all soiled and dragged with wet. Certainly the young girl had lived with rich people, but what was the trouble which had turned her out on the world like this? And as Jane bent over her she saw that the pretty face had flushed to a deep feverish red, and that the breath came in hoarse, struggling gasps through the dry lips. The girl tossed from side to side, and moaned in her sleep; and Jane sent her sister to bed, and sat up all night, too anxious herself to sleep.

In the course of next Month will be commenced

## A DRAWN GAME, A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT."

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*